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Current Support Brief

USSR BOOSTS COMPUTER PLAN



CIA/RR CB 64-27

April 1964

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of Research and Reports

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USSR BOOSTS COMPUTER PLAN

Recently published information indicates that production of electronic computers and related equipment* in the USSR has been growing faster than called for in the original goals of the Seven Year Plan (1959-65) and that Soviet planners intend to maintain the higher rate of growth for the remaining 2 years of the plan. Under the current goal for growth of 70 percent, Soviet production of electronic computers over the next 2 years probably will reach the level of at least 260 million rubles** by 1965. This level is about 30 percent above the original goal of the Seven Year Plan and is indicative of the inadequacy of the original plan in relation to current military and civilian needs.

The priority accorded by the USSR to production of computers and related equipment reflects the importance of scientific and military research and economic planning. Recent advances in Soviet solid state and other component technology also may be important factors in raising the quality and quantity of electronic computers produced. Evidence of expansion in production of computers can be observed in the construction of new plants for the manufacture of computers as well as in the opening of new computer centers.

In spite of the rapid growth in Soviet production of computers and related equipment, total production is only about one-sixth of the US level. Starting from a small base in 1958, the USSR has experienced substantial problems in attaining its present position, and the level of production still remains woefully inadequate for the requirements of the economy.

* The terms computers and related equipment and computers as used in this publication refer to analog and digital computers and data-processing equipment such as printers, card punch machines, and the like that are serially produced for economic, scientific, or military end use as well as to special-purpose economic or scientific machines. The terms exclude special-purpose military computing equipment.

** Ruble values in this publication are given in 1955 prices expressed in new rubles and may be converted to US dollars at the appropriate ruble-dollar ratio for electronic equipment of 0.6 ruble to US \$1. 1/ Relative comparisons of the US and USSR should be considered as approximate and not precise, because the US production data are based on current US prices.

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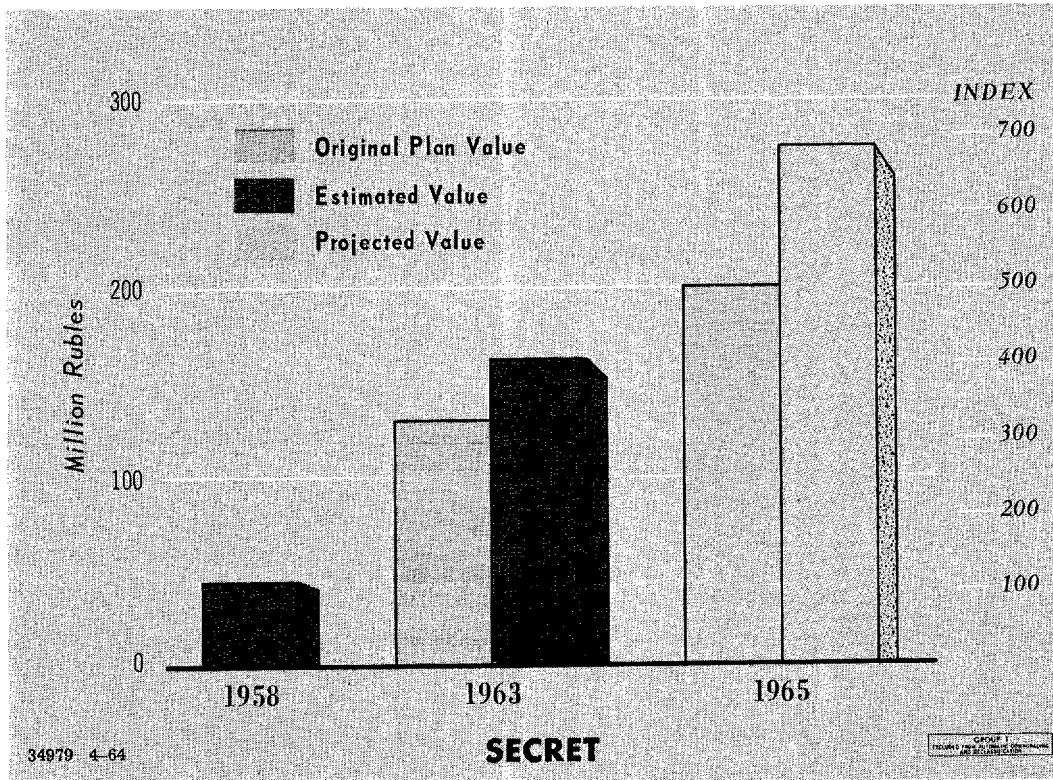
1. Rapid Growth

The original goals of the Soviet Seven Year Plan,* announced in 1958, provide for an average annual rate of growth of 24 to 25 percent, which would have resulted in production for 1963 valued at about 130 million rubles. However, announced production of computing equipment for the RSFSR alone in 1963 was 130 million rubles. 2/ Information on the activity of plants and institutes in other Soviet republics suggests that the value of production of computing equipment outside the RSFSR probably would be on the order of 25 million to 40 million rubles, bringing total production of computers in the USSR in 1963 to 155 million to 170 million rubles, or about 20 to 30 percent above the level implied by the original plan.

The revised goal for growth stipulates an increase of 70 percent in electronic computers and related equipment between 1963 and 1965, or an average annual rate of growth of 30 percent. 3/ On the basis of a conservative value for 1963 this rate should result in production for 1965 of at least 260 million rubles, approximately 30 percent higher than the original goal of the Seven Year Plan of 200 million rubles. The RSFSR, which produces the major part of computers and related equipment, has indicated that production of computers will be above the original goals of the Seven Year Plan for the next 2 years. 4/ The original and revised estimates of output of computers and related equipment are shown graphically below.

* Original goals of the Seven Year Plan were stated for "computing and mathematical machines," production in the RSFSR in 1963 was given for "computing equipment," and the terminology "computing equipment and electronic control machinery" was used in specifying the rate of growth for 1964-65. It cannot be determined specifically what types of equipment other than computers are included in these categories; however, the bulk undoubtedly falls under "computers and related equipment" as defined above, particularly as the revised plan figure for 1964-65 excludes automatic lines and programed machine tools.

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2. Comparison with the US

Production of electronic computers and related equipment in the USSR, although still small in comparison with levels in the US, apparently is growing at a rate that is roughly comparable. In 1963, Soviet production of computing equipment of about 155 million to 170 million rubles was about one-sixth of the US level of production; estimated Soviet production in 1965 may amount to about 260 million to 290 million rubles, or nearly one-fifth of that in the US. ^{5/} The US product mix is weighted heavily in favor of digital computers. In comparison, digital computers only recently have begun to dominate the production pattern in the USSR.

3. Evidence of Expansion

Concomitant with the rapid rise in production of computers and related equipment in the USSR, evidence of expansion of plant and equipment

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has been noted. A new plant for production of electronic computers is under construction in Yerevan, Armenia. Existing production facilities are being enlarged, and some machine building plants are expanding their product lines to include support equipment for computers -- for example, the Moscow Portable Typewriter Plant is manufacturing electroimpulse typewriters as print-out components for computers. The Vil'nyus Computing Machine Plant expanded its production facilities and has become one of the largest producers of computers in the USSR. During 1964 the RSFSR plans to have 15 to 20 additional enterprises specialize in producing computing and office equipment. 6/

4. End Uses

Major end users of electronic computers and related equipment are the military services, scientific institutes, industrial enterprises, and the computer centers for economic planning. In recent years a larger number of computers have been going into limited economic planning, and in 1963 at least 13 new centers were opened in the proposed system of computer centers. Computer centers, incorporating large computers and related data-handling equipment, are to form eventually a network to perform collection, compilation, and construction of data for use in creating regional and national economic plans. Thus far, however, computers have been used mainly on technical problems of economic planning, such as determining the optimum locations for new plants of particular branches of industry. In addition, military demand for large, mass-produced computing equipment continues to absorb a large part of production.

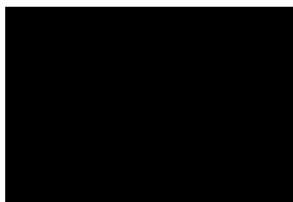
Sources:

1. CIA. CIA/RR ER 61-11, Production of Electronic Computers in the USSR, 1958-65, Mar 61. S.
2. Sovetskaya Rossiya, 25 Jan 64. U.
3. Ekonomicheskaya gazeta, no 1, 4 Jan 64, p. 4. U.
4. Leningradskaya pravda, 16 Jun 63. U.
5. Electronics, 3 Jan 64. U.
6. Leningradskaya pravda, 16 Jun 63. U.

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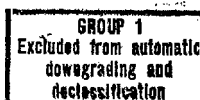
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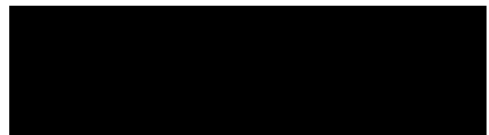
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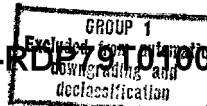
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